

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 04355 052120Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 IO-13 VO-05
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TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, BL
SUBJECT: HMONG RESETTLEMENT IN BOLIVIA

REF: BANGKOK 15009 (NOTAL)

1. FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT LARRY WARD AND THAI DELEGATION LED BY UNDER SECRETARY OF INTERIOR WINYU CALLED ON THE AMBASSADOR JUNE 2 TO DISCUSS THE PILOT PROJECT TO RESETTLE HMONG REFUGEES IN BOLIVIA. IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A COURTESY CALL, AND NO ASSISTANCE WAS REQUESTED.

2. WARD AND THE THAIS, WHO DEALT EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S SUB SECRETARY FOR MIGRATORY AFFAIRS GUIDO STRAUSS, SEEMED PLEASED BY THE PROGRESS REGISTERED THUS FAR. WHILE THE BOLIVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD STILL NOT SIGNED THE ENABLING AGREEMENT, STRAUSS HAD ASSURED THEM THAT THE MINISTER WOULD DO SO SOON, PROBABLY WITHIN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE WEEKS. MEANWHILE, TEN HECTARES OF LAND HAVE BEEN CLEARED AT THE RESETTLEMENT SITE IN THE BENJ DEPARTMENT, AND ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO CLEAR TEN MORE.
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SOME HEAVY EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING TRACTORS AND TRUCKS, WILL BE SENT SHORTLY FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND WILL BE PERMITTED DUTY-FREE ENTRY INTO BOLIVIA UNDER A COOPERATIVE UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS. THE ADVANCE TEAM OF TEN HMONG ARE NOW EXPECTED IN AUGUST, WITH THE FIRST FAMILIES, IN GROUPS OF ABOUT 14 PERSONS EACH,

BEGINNING TO ARRIVE IN EARLY OCTOBER.

3. AS IN THE PAST, WARD WAS VOLUABLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROJECT'S PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS. HE AND THE THAIS WERE CONFIDENT STRAUSS WAS DOING HIS BEST TO GUIDE THE PAPERWORK THROUGH THE BOLIVIAN BUREAUCRACY, AND THEREFORE HAD MADE NO ATTEMPT TO MEET WITH ANY OTHER BOLIVIAN OFFICIALS.

4. COMMENT. WE HOPE WARD'S OPTIMISM IS NOT MIFA PLACED. THE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT IS WELL CONCEIVED, AND SHOULD EVENTUALLY TAKE HOLD IN BOLIVIA. WITH GENERAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 9, HOWEVER, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PUT OFF SIGNING THE AGREEMENT, LEAVING THE HMONG RESETTLEMENT ISSUE FOR THE NEW CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION.

BOEKER

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